



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: Sito Negron
915.351.3500 (o) // 915.227.0360 (m)

Health and Human Services committee to discuss mental health system gaps and telemedicine

El Paso – The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services will have hearings tomorrow to review interim charges related to closing gaps in the mental health care system, and application of telemedicine. The interim charges to be discussed are as follows:

- *Study and make recommendations on establishing collaborative partnerships between state-owned mental health hospitals and university health science centers to improve inpatient state mental health services, maximize the state mental health workforce, and reduce healthcare costs.*
- *Study the impact of recent efforts by the legislature to divert individuals with serious mental illness from criminal justice settings and prevent recidivism. Study and make recommendations to address the state's ongoing need for inpatient forensic capacity, including the impact of expanding community inpatient psychiatric beds.*
- *Study and make recommendations on the appropriate use, scope and application of tele-monitoring and telemedicine services to improve management and outcomes for adults and children with complex medical needs and for persons confined in correctional facilities. Examine barriers to implementation of these services and any impact on access to health care services in rural areas of the state.*

The hearings begin at **9 a.m. CST** in Austin (8 a.m. MST in El Paso), and can be viewed live online at this following link: <http://www.senate.texas.gov/bin/live.php>

José Rodríguez represents Texas Senate District 29, which includes the counties of El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, and Presidio. He represents both urban and rural constituencies, and more than 350 miles of the Texas-Mexico border. Senator Rodríguez currently serves as the Chairman of the Texas Senate Democratic Caucus, and is a member of the Senate Committees on Education; Health and Human Services; Veteran Affairs and Military Installations; Nominations; and Agriculture, Water, and Rural Affairs.